

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

MIZMOR SHIR

Tears and Prayers

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

In the evening one lies down weeping, but with dawn—a cry of joy!...To You, Hashem, I would call and to my L-rd I would appeal...Hear, Hashem and favor me; Hashem be my Helper...Hashem my G-d, forever will I thank you.

...בערב ילין בכי
ולבקר רנה... אליך ה'
אקרא ואל ה' אתחנן... שמע
ה' וחנוני ה' היה עזר
לי... ה' אלקי לעולם אודך:

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



“From the day the (Second) Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, the Gates of Prayer are locked.” Yet, even though the gates of prayer are locked, the gates of tears are not locked.” Rav Yonasan Eibeshutz (*Yaaros Devash*, Volume 2, Drash 11) offers an astounding insight. The numerical equivalent of the word בכי – ‘weeping’ is 32, the same as the word *lev* -- ‘heart.’ This teaches that the tefillos of the one who prays with *kavannah* – ‘intent of the heart’ - enter Heaven through the ever-open Gates. *Kavannah* transforms our daily prayers into heartfelt supplications able to reach the Throne of *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*.

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

Stirring the Heart

The purpose of trouble or pain is to rouse us to pray and pour out our hearts to Hashem.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Reason to Pray

The young woman had everything for which to be thankful — good friends, wonderful parents, an interesting job and excellent prospects for finding a marriage partner. When she opened her siddur each morning, she came to Hashem with a content, somewhat complacent heart. As time passed and no marriage was forthcoming, the young woman was beset by fears. “What if I never get married? What if I have to spend my life alone?” Now when she prayed, there was no trace of complacency. Her prayers rose up from deep within her and she reached out to Hashem with all her might. She needed to feel Hashem’s closeness. In her troubles, she found the key to her solution.

Rav Yeruchem Levovitz (*Daas Chachmah U'Mussar*, Volume 1, *Maamar* 4; Volume 2, *Maamar* 72), *Mashgiach* of the Mirrer Yeshivah in Europe, explains that it is our feelings of fear that cause us to pray, which

in turn enables good to occur. Our usual way of thinking is that when trouble occurs, we must pray to Hashem; we would prefer, however, that the difficulty not arise in the first place.

Rav Yeruchem explains that this perspective indicates a lack of understanding as to what is actually taking place. In reality, the purpose of the trouble or pain is to rouse us to pray and to pour out our hearts to Hashem, and for Him to then respond with the salvation. He conveys this point with an analogy:

Before a tree can bear fruit, the ground must first be plowed and the sapling planted. Similarly, the afflictions that we must endure in life represent the plowing and sowing that compel us to pray to Hashem so that we can then reap the fruit of His salvation.

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Lost and Found

The four-year-old balked as his father beckoned. “Stay with me, Chaim. Don’t wander around. You’ll get lost.” They walked down the city street together, Chaim, his father, an infant in a carriage and a toddler holding onto it. Chaim would not stay with the carriage, for there was too much to see in the shop windows. Chaim’s father, on the other hand, could only



supply two hands and two eyes to keep his crew in line. After stalling, unnoticed, in front of a candy store, Chaim looked up and realized his father was out of sight.

“Daddy, Daddy! Where are you?” he cried. His little heart longed to see his father close at hand, to touch the hem of his jacket and stand in the

security of his shadow. He cried desperately, though only for a moment, for soon his father realized Chaim had not followed and retraced his steps back to the crying boy.

Like the little boy, we stray from our Father, seeking a sense of freedom and more interesting vistas. Yet, when we look up and suddenly realize Hashem is out of sight – we cannot feel His love and guidance in our lives – we cry out for Him from the depths of our hearts. Thus our tears reawaken our devotion and bring our Father close to us again.

Try This!

► Each of us has times when our davening is especially powerful. It might be a time of trouble, in which a person feels that his heart has really opened to Hashem, or it might be a time of joy, when he feels like an especially beloved and blessed child. Think of the physical feeling of full-heartedness that accompanies that intense type of davening, and try to revive it, for just a moment, when saying ...בערב ילין בכי ולבקר רנה.

Did You Know

► Everyday Miracles

The Gemara (Berachos 32a) states that a person should always articulate the praise of Hakadosh Boruch Hu before he prays. This praise refers to Pesukei D'Zimrah, which is recited during Shacharis before Shemoneh Esrei. In the Gemara (Shabbos 118a), Rabbi Yose says, “May my portion be among those who complete Hallel every day.” The Gemara (ibid.) explains that Rabbi Yosi's statement refers to “Hallel” in Pesukei D'Zimrah, specifically Psalm 148 and 150, both of which begin with the words “הללו-ה, הללו...”. The fact that these Psalms do not speak of Hashem's miracles, but rather, they praise the everyday miracles of nature with which Hashem runs the world, indicates that we must cultivate gratitude for even the “normal” functioning of the universe, which is all dependent upon Hashem (Meshech Chochmah on Vayikrah 26:4).